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## Ethical Message in the Function of Encouraging Social Competence of Students in Classes of Language and Literature

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*The paper deals with the problem of socialization of students through verbal communication in language and literature classes. It focuses on the ethical aspect of communication in the process of interaction between the student and the teacher, that is regarded as a teaching technique. Using analytical observations, the author shows that the ethical message in pedagogical communication can achieve maximum isomorphism of emphatic and altruistic meanings and thus directly affect the development of social competence of students, and the suppression of peer violence in elementary schools. Realization of these hypotheses assumes proper methodical weft of a class, a high degree of communication competence of teachers, motivation for students' work, Socratic principle of proving ethical axioms by arguments, and contemporary contextualization of verbal culture teaching.*

*Keywords: communicability, ethical messages pedagogical communication, socialization, non-violence.*

### 1. Introduction

In the aspect of ontogenesis, the violence begins as early as in preschool period, reaches its climax in primary school and decreases in high school. Everyday tragic and disturbing news in mass media supports the thesis that little bullies also apply learned violent forms of aggressive behaviour as mature people. So, the phenomenon of bullying among children is not accompanying, nor the momentary phenomenon but the result of direct environmental impact (in the family or immediate neighbourhood). These

are acquired patterns of behaviour which must be not only corrected but replaced by more humane ways of behaving with the fellow people, at school in particular. First of all, school must be a safe place where students feel comfortable and safe, as figures of respect and values. Despite the fact that many schools organize different social projects or programs to prevent bullying, conflict and aggression among children, we believe that the role of teachers in the process of humanization of relations between students is irreplaceable.

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Teacher's role is crucial not only in the direction of educational and cultivating activities, but towards the modelling world outlook of their students, shaping lives of young people. In that sense, it is important to warn that children have an inborn "lie detector", i.e. a natural feeling to estimate the sincerity of the person. The cultivating role of the teachers based on the blank story will not bear fruit. They must truly live in harmony with the ethical messages that instructs children, they must substantiate them with their own behaviour in order to make such messages mark of the overall pedagogical communication in the classroom. Positive attitude toward students, compassion with their problems, kindness and respect in dealing with them, care and understanding – are the only way to more humane social relations.

Of course, communication with parents and guardians is not underestimated. It should not be reduced to formal forms of parent meetings, especially if the teacher sees a problem in the class. This communication can be of advisory and informative nature, and its goal is to prevent and stop violence against children. Fear of the abuser does not only inhibit mental and physical development of students, but also can lead to multiple negative consequences.

Pedagogical-psychological and didactic-methodological research focus. Of course, communication with parents and guardians cannot be underestimated. It should not be reduced to formal forms of parent meetings, especially if the teacher noticed a problem in the class. This communication may be of advisory and informative nature, and its goal is to prevent and stop violence against children. Fear of the abuser not only inhibits mental and physical development of students, but can lead to multiple negative consequences.

Pedagogical-psychological and didactic-methodological research focused

on contemporary schooling mostly refers to consulting teachers and students about how to live and work at school without violence. Pedagogical theoretical thought tends to develop tolerant, non-violent relationships between students along with altruistic forms of behaviour. In this context, we tried to convey the latest pedagogical achievements in the methodological framework of teaching grammar and literature, based on the postulates of ethical messages communicability in the function of encouraging social competence of students.

## **2. Ethical message communicability and cultivation**

Multi-dimensional teaching material of the overall teaching process is based on the pedagogical communication. Communication structures in a class are defined correspondingly to the teaching strategies, methodologies and forms of work, and in that sense they are determined by the monologue or dialogue, oral or written word, text or discourse, communication in pairs, groups or in the whole class. Of course, communication is postulated on the effect of spoken or written words, or the communicability of messages, the expressive power of which originates from the communication competence of the teachers. Considering the professional linguistic foundation, it is realistic to expect a peak of communicative competence of the language and literature teachers.

In the context of students' socialization and encouragement of humanistic vision at school, we consider language and literature classes to be extremely important for cherishing altruistic and pacifistic ideas in the classroom. In this sense, is the classic "didactic triangle", based on mutual relations (Goleman, 2006) is applicable:

teacher ↔ teaching material ↔ student,

It is also a schematic paraphrase of the communication triangle of relations:

transmitter ↔ message ↔ recipient.

Teleological aspect of these triangles is based on adoption and cherishing the ethical axioms implemented in specific situational context. Since each communicative activity is based on exchanging messages, the fulfilment of teaching objectives and tasks largely depends on the fulfilment of the structure of ethical didactically motivated message. Language and literature teacher has to assume the following in the essence of the message:

- 1) information core,
- 2) further explanation (redundancy) necessary for supporting information, and
- 3) value layers of persuasive character (Latin Persuasion: advice, belief).

In the essence of teaching, the message composition contains: namely, the core of information that includes cognition, redundancy (explanation, interpretation), value layers, and connotative dimensions of the ethical message cultivating (acquisition of value system based on the presented cognition).

So: The message can be defined as symbolically organized information, with an aim and value, i.e., in pedagogic communication, as didactic motives, in particular symbolic form and with persuasive direction expressed information. Thus structured pedagogical message is broader than the information (cognition) and its communicability gains great strength expanding not only into additional explanations but also into value layers with which the teacher implies dosed persuasiveness in the form of encouragement, reassurance and stating their own views on the information. Consequently, the more complex the message is, the richer (with more layers) the core of its information is, the greater redundancy, and the more jagged the persuasive layers are. The message can be sublimated in one word, one symbol, but also developed in a textual entity or

symbolic nonverbal performance; it can be one sentence or a text, an article in the newspaper or a stage performance.

Equivalently to that, a communicable message is the one that realizes optimal isomorphism for the transmitter and for the recipient, i.e. the Teacher and the Student. An effective pedagogical communicative act is achieved by exchanging such messages. How to encode a communicable ethical message in order to be teleologically justified at language and literature classes?

According to the recommendation given by pedagogues, the message must be: adjusted to students' age, fixed in composition, and the volume of contained knowledge, with the optimal proportion between the cognitive and value elements, between pragmatic and aesthetic levels.

Ethical (pedagogical) message designed this way can be considered communicable, i.e. it can enrich new knowledge (informational core) in the subcontext of already acquired knowledge, enrich student's understanding of the world and life, develop curiosity and interest in social and natural sensations and encourage empathy, tolerance, solidarity and generosity. In the first four grades of primary school, in this regard, aesthetic layer of ethical message should be particularly emphasized, firstly with illustrations, drawings and other forms of iconic performances. Therefore it is not surprising that textbooks designed for the school age are full of pictures. However, stage arts can be very inspiring and convincing in achieving the envisaged objectives: a small school stage, puppetry, animated and feature films.

To post a highly ethical communicable message, which means to encourage social competency of students, it has to contain the wealth of knowledge in its informational core: the Rights of the Child, the values of life, feelings,

justice, moral behaviour, respect, friendship, cooperation and dedication, of the proper way of resolving conflict, diversity, prejudices and taboos, then care about the flora and fauna and the general state of the planet Earth.

This complex informational core requires explanations, i.e. redundancy in the form of talks encouraged by illustrations, children's songs, literary, stage and visual art creations for children. These activities are followed by dancing, art, drama, puppet workshops primarily in the group form of work.

Persuasiveness of value layers stems from previous structural and pedagogical layers and implies new forms of behaviour appropriate to violence-free school. Compatibility of ecological messages will result in the relationship based on friendship, trust, compassion, assistance, joint efforts and work ... on one side, and condemnation of violent behaviour based on threats, blackmail, pressure, punishment, physical and verbal harassment, theft and sadistic behaviour of each species, on the other side.

### **3. Ethical messages in the range of teaching grammar and literature**

When talking about the presence of ethical messages within the teaching of grammar and literature, the key question that arises is about the connection between literary / linguistic and ethical information. The situation is crystal clear when talking about the relationship of literary–artistic achievements and life values: it is a dense network of interwoven motives, beliefs and morals, on correlation of mutual permeation of layered coherence of rich meaningful structure. In this sense, the interpretation of each text (home or school) read in class can always be functional in initiating and developing social competence of students.

However, when it comes to teaching grammar, things are no longer as simple.

Layers of pedagogic messages must now be filled with parallel contents of linguistic and ethical information. The eternal key issue in the methodology is: how?

Therefore, the statement itself imposes a possible solution of the problem by organizing so-called teaching parallelism between grammatical methodical units, and civil (or religious) education on the other side. Teaching parallelism can be lifted to the level of thematic teaching (Janjic, 2008) in which the moral values can be discussed through the grammatical, mathematical, musical or artistic approach, not to mention how much the classes like “The world around us” and Physical Education can provide. As for the correlation between grammar and civil (religious) education, the closest link will primarily be the lingual and methodical texts given for analysis. So, the lingual methodical template must be saturated with examples of specific linguistic categories, and their theme must contribute to the development of altruistic, emphatic and friendly traits in students and thus aid the *development of their socialization, tolerance and respect for the rights and personality of all people around them.*

It is important to emphasize that in this conception (two) classes that we initially interpret contain the concept that foresees “the education of heart” or the basic “social (emotional) literacy” and that their interpretation is methodologically shaped by the selected teaching strategies. In the second part (or better in the second class) the linguistic analysis, i.e. the teaching interpretation of the material in the field of language, is carried out. Ideally, in the third, creative, productive part of this complex teaching procedure, it is necessary to shape the blend of the ethical and linguistic messages, i.e. practice newly acquired knowledge of grammar through examples of ethical content. Acquisition and development of communicative and social

competence of students can always run in parallel alongside with the text method, the method of dialogues or monologues, but also by demonstration of real-life situations, teaching parallelisms within complex educational messages.

Modern teaching methodology speaks in favour of the holistic approach to language and social issues in class. Namely, the situation method known in the world of science as the method case, helps to construct the teaching context with the help of real-life situations from which genuine communication springs. Thus, situational and linguistic context are incorporated together in the teaching context of grammar processing. In that sense, the reconstruction of environmental realities is in the function of learning grammar, and the theme can be adjusted with valorization of life values. Specifically, such texts (with ethical content) are suitable for grammatical analysis. In this way the acquisition of social competence will be, honestly, in the background, but even the so-called periphery learning should be estimated, as it leaves permanent traces in the (sub) consciousness of students.

Also, as an example of verbal situational context we must not forget the printed and electronic media, especially school magazine, radio and TV shows which often deal the problems of adolescents' socialization. And those lines can be a part of a linguistic and stylistic analysis in class, with a transparent impact of humanistic life orientation and conviction of violent and generally delinquent behaviour.

Bjorkvold J.-R., the famous Norwegian pedagogue and music teacher, said: "Aesthetics becomes an important link just in time when the relationship between nature and culture, body and soul is in in crisis ..." (Bjorkvold, 1989). Therefore, the third way of connecting

teaching grammar and ethical values is the integration of fine arts in teaching process of dealing with linguistic units. This method is multiply effective in the favour of language teaching because dry and often exact content is refreshed by the art, refined with aesthetic and ethical values and so it inspires students to work. At some stage, a song about friendship can be heard or sang, or a poem of such content can be recited and the conversation about paintings or selected illustrations with the content of humanistic experience of the world can serve as an example of grammatical units. Also, integration of fine arts in teaching material of grammatical interpretation refers to: comics, theatre, opera, and cinematograph. These works can serve as the basis for lingual and methodical text for analysis in some way.

#### 4. Conclusion

Biblical theme of fratricide, incarnated through the legend of Cain and Abel, represents the very beginning of violence on Earth. From then until the present day, in the labyrinth of violent sin and punishment in the form terrifying suffering, human existence is accompanied by plague of envy, selfishness, fear and punishment. The only real way to forming humanistic society is education and cultivating the spirit of altruism, empathy, tolerance and understanding.

The problem of bullying in schools concerns not only teachers, but also the wider public. Ignoring makes these problems pile up and the results are scary, as socially awkward children find themselves at risk and often the teachers themselves become victims of aggressive behaviour among students. Therefore, the author of the paper deals with the problem of socialization of students in classes of grammar and literature. In the centre of the teaching communication is communicability of

ethical message that includes educational effects on recipients', i.e. students' side of teaching communicative process. The conclusion is that linguistic and ethical messages in pedagogic communication can combine, and so achieve maximum isomorphism of empathic and altruistic meaning in the relationships between teachers and students (i.e. transmitter–recipient) and thus directly affect the development of

social competence of students, and suppress peer violence in primary schools.

Realization of these hypotheses assumes proper methodical weft of the class, a high degree of communication and social competence of teachers, the width of the applied methods, creativity, motivation for work with students, and contemporary contextualization of teaching language and literature.

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## Этический фактор как функция стимулирования социальной компетентности в процессе обучения

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Статья посвящена проблеме социализации учащихся через устное общение. В центре внимания этический аспект коммуникации в процессе общения студента и преподавателя, использованного как прием учебной деятельности. Роль преподавателя в этих условиях имеет решающее значение не только в направлении деятельности образования, но и в направлении моделирования мировоззрения учащихся. В этом смысле очень важно предупредить, что дети имеют врожденный «детектор лжи», то есть в естественном смысле они могут судить об искренности. Воспитательная роль учителя на основе пустых историй не будет приносить свои плоды. Преподаватель должен по-настоящему жить в гармонии с этической стороной посылаемых им сообщений через свое собственное поведение, чтобы обосновать такие сообщения.

Ключевые слова: коммуникабельность, этические сообщения педагогического общения, социализация, отказ от насилия.

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